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SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO CONDITIONS PLACED ON TCG

REF: A. STATE 03932 B.CANBERRA 55 C.STATE 27325

(SBU) Andrew Collins, Director Mekong Section, Asia Bilateral Branch, AusAID, responding to Ref C demarche on changes to the Tripartite Core Group's (TCG) mandate in Burma, furnished Poloff April 15 with the following points:

- Australia recognizes the critical role played by ASEAN and the TCG in facilitating humanitarian assistance to the victims of Cyclone Nargis.
- Australia welcomes the extension of the TCG mandate to July 2010 and continues to make representations in ASEAN capitals in support of the TCG mechanism.
- Recent significant changes to the TCG mandate regarding the provisions of visas and travel permission for aid workers mean that humanitarian access to cyclone affected areas is now subject to the same arrangements applying to humanitarian activities in other parts of the country.
- The changes are concerning, but it is hoped that they do not dramatically affect relief and recovery work. Australia is closely monitoring the impact of the changes on the ground.

CLUNE